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LB 176

classes but no boater education classes. More responsibility needs to be taken with personal watercraft. There are no rules or regulations concerning jet skis. Why there is no rules or regulations is a mystery. This has been my third year trying to help pass a bill that should have been in place years ago. There are lives at stake, old and young alike." I introduced this bill and it would...it's certainly too late to address those who have already been injured or lost their lives regarding jet skis, but this is a first step, a reasonable, rational, practical approach to the issue of jet ski operations on Nebraska's waterways. Less than 10 percent of all watercraft in the state are jet skis, but they make up 85...85 percent of the accidents. To the bill, the bill is fairly straightforward. It has, of course, the potential this session to be our first Christmas tree, but right now I'm simply going to talk about LB 176 and the version which I submitted to the Natural Resources Committee. It defines personal watercraft. It requires that all persons aboard the personal watercraft must wear flotation devices, must have a lanyard-style cutoff switch. It says that personal watercrafts may be operated during the day, one-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset. A person who shall operate one of these personal watercrafts should do so at a no-wake speed of 5 miles per hour...5 miles per hour or less within 30 yards of a dock, a boat ramp, a person swimming, a bridge structure, a moored or anchored vessel, a sewage pump-out facility, and a nonmotorized watercraft. A personal watercraft shall be operated in a reasonable and prudent manner, and persons shall face forward when operating the vehicle. A personal watercraft should not be used to tow a person on water skis or on an inflatable device unless that vehicle is designed for that purpose. Effective January the 1st, 2000, a person under 16 years of age shall not operate a personal watercraft unless a person who is 17 years of age or older is aboard the vehicle, or unless the person 16 or under, but not less than 14 years of age, has completed a boating safety course. These requirements do not apply to people who are participating in regattas, in races, in marine parades, tournaments, or exhibitions. We will have the opportunity to view a series of amendments regarding personal watercraft and perhaps some that are in the ball park, I guess, and we'll take those one by one. But the initial bill, which I believe is...will be improved by the committee amendments, is a